

Drive Time -- Safety Tips for VT Drivers

Information, tips and reminders from those who work to keep Vermont drivers safe –

VT State Police, VT Department of Motor Vehicles, VT Agency of Transportation, VT Sheriffs Association. and the AARP Driver Safety Program.

Safe Summer Travel Tips

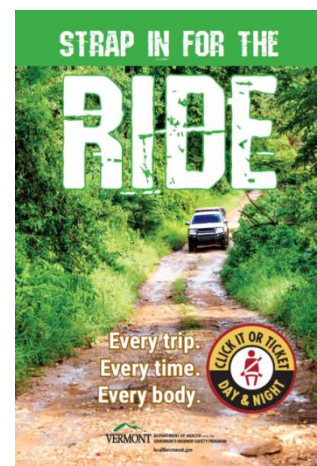
Summer is here, and for many of us that means it's time to hit the road for a fun family vacation trip. These tips can prevent a breakdown or crash from spoiling the fun:

Before You Go

- Check for recalls on your vehicle by using the NHTSA search tool at www.safercar.gov.
- Make sure your vehicle is up to date on routine maintenance like oil changes and tire rotation.
- Check tires (including the spare) for excessive or uneven tread wear and correct air pressure (when tires are cold, using the pressure listed on the car door frame, not the tires).
- Inspect belts and hoses for secure connections or any signs of bulges, blisters, cracks or cuts.
- Replace worn wiper blades.
- When the car is cool, check coolant level and appearance, and see your mechanic if there are signs of rust, particles, sludge or oil in it.
- Check fluid levels (oil, brake, transmission, power steering and windshield washer) and make sure there are no leaks.
- Make sure all lights (headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, interior lights and trailer lights) are in working order and clean.
- Check the air conditioning performance.
- Clean windshield, windows and mirrors.
- Even with all this preparation, the unexpected can happen, so be sure your emergency roadside kit is packed, with items like a first aid kit, flashlight, flares and a white flag, jumper cables, tire pressure gauge, tire jack, windshield wiper fluid, work gloves and spare clothes, basic tools, duct tape, paper towels or rags, water, snacks, medicines, maps, blankets, towels and coats. And don't forget your cell phone and charger.

On the Road

- Always make sure everyone is wearing a safety belt.
- And children must be securely protected by an age and size appropriate, properly installed car seat or booster seat. For help with seat selection or installation, see www.beseatsmart.org or call 1-888-VMT-SEAT (868-7328). All children 13 and younger should ride in the back seat.
- Never leave children or pets unattended in a parked vehicle. Even in a few minutes, with windows open or with the engine running, the temperature inside can reach deadly levels.
- Be sure to lock your vehicle's doors at all times when it's not in use, and put the keys where children can't get to them.
- Plan enough time to stop along the way for stretch and bathroom breaks, to get something to eat and drink, return any calls or text messages, and change drivers.



- Don't make your days on the road so long they become more exhausting than fun, and always stop driving at the first sign that you're feeling tired or drowsy.
- Bring along a few favorite books, videos, or soft toys to keep little ones content and occupied.
- Never smoke when you are in the car with children. It's illegal in Vermont (up to age 8) and in some other states up to various ages. Legal or not, it's distracting and unhealthy so don't do it.
- Warmer weather brings out more motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians; watch out for them, and give them plenty of distance.
- Remember to stop for pedestrians who are in a crosswalk, even if it's not marked.
- Take extra care to make sure there are no children in your blind spots before backing up.
- Make sure you drive at a safe speed for road conditions, which may be less than the legal limit.
- Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic.
- Maintain a safe following distance (at least 3 or 4 seconds, and more for poor road conditions and visibility).
- On the highway, use the left lane only for passing, left exits and giving space to emergency vehicles on the side of the road. Laws in all 50 states now require that drivers move over when it can be done safely, or slow down as they go by.
- **Never** use your phone to call or text while driving, and avoid any activities that take your eyes and attention off the road, such as other electronic devices or in-vehicle technology, and even eating, drinking or interacting with passengers.
- **Never** drive when impaired by alcohol or drugs of any kind. Even some legal medications can be deadly on the road, so consult your doctor before driving. If you're stuck without a designated driver, NHTSA's SaferRide app (available from the iTunes store or Google Play) can pinpoint your location and help you find and call for a ride from a taxi or rideshare service or friends listed in your contacts.

And don't forget to: **Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time. Everybody.**